

Proposal STS Conference 2014 in Graz, Special Session 7: „The politics of ICTs“

Fighting with Vidyo for common Goals

Virtue and vice of communication technologies in team-oriented knowledge production of high-energy physics

The software „Vidyo" is the most important communication tool for all members of the CERN-Corporation. Although around 10.000 people work all around the globe with data gathered at the Large Hadron Collider, only 3000 of them are permanently working at the CERN in Switzerland. Most of the researchers have never been in Meyrin and know the particle detectors just from pictures. Nevertheless communication takes place everyday, thanks to ICTs. Since 2013 the Collaboration developed its own communication software, „Vidyo“, which I aim to analyze in my presentation. For that purpose, I want to present first research results of my current ethnographic study, where I aim to systematically compare work practices and modes of thinking within two scientific collaborations using particle detectors at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) of the CERN in Geneva: the ATLAS (A Toroidal LHC Apparatus) and the CMS (Compact Muon Solenoid). More specifically, I will investigate how and if electronic communication devices govern and serve the process of knowledge production, and how they influence a situation where people form an entangled collaboration with gigantic subterranean particle detectors to produce a coherent cosmology out of contingent data as an interplay of humans, machines and media.

Short Bio

Dr. des. Anne Dippel, M.A. studied History, Cultural Studies and Socio-Cultural Anthropology in Tübingen, London, Berlin and Vienna. She received her Master in History (Humboldt-University, Berlin) with a Thesis on the relationship between nationality and religion of the German population in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. She received her Ph.D. 2013 in Socio-Cultural Anthropology (Humboldt-University Berlin) with an Ethnography about the relationship between language, media and nationality in the context of post-war and contemporary Austrian writers writing in German language. She is currently a post-doc at the Humboldt-University Berlin, conducting socio-anthropological fieldwork on spatio-temporal imaginations and practices in contemporary high-energy physics laboratories.